

Filed for intro on 03/01/95
Senate Bill _____
By _____

House No. HJR0118
By Bragg

A RESOLUTION to congratulate coach Boots Donnelly for receiving the 1995 Tennessee Sportswriters Association's Coach of the Year award.

WHEREAS, throughout its history the legislative body of this great state has seen fit to honor those Tennesseans who symbolize integrity, dedication and success in their chosen professions; and

WHEREAS, nowhere is this commitment to excellence more evident than at Middle Tennessee State University, where for 16 seasons Coach Boots Donnelly has set a precedent for winning in college football; and

WHEREAS, for his remarkable efforts on the gridiron, Coach Donnelly has been deservedly chosen by the Tennessee Sportswriters Association as its 1995 Coach of the Year; and

WHEREAS, during his amazing tenure as coach of the Blue Raiders, Coach Donnelly's teams have posted a 118-67-1 record, including seven trips to the Division I-AA Playoffs and four Ohio Valley Conference championships; and

WHEREAS, although he gathered 11 out of the 21 first place votes, easily outdistancing the second place finisher, Coach Donnelly displayed his usual modesty in accepting the award, reflecting on the contributions made by his players and coaching staff; and

WHEREAS, winning football games has become a tradition at MTSU, where Coach Donnelly returned in 1978, after graduating in 1965; and

WHEREAS, he took over the reins of a once proud football tradition that had not compiled a winning record in six seasons and quickly brought respectability to the program; and

WHEREAS, Coach Donnelly turned the corner in 1981 with a 6-5 season, the highlight of which was an upset over Murray State, the nations' top-ranked Division I-AA team at the time; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, MTSU won an at-large berth in the NCAA Division I-AA Playoff, the first appearance ever for the Blue Raiders, and advanced to the national semifinals before being eliminated by Louisiana Tech, after earlier playoff wins over OVC champ Eastern Kentucky and fourth-seeded Indiana State; and

WHEREAS, the 1985 Blue Raiders finished with a perfect 11-0 record, won their first OVC title since 1965 and were ranked No. 1 in the national I-AA poll over the final five weeks of the season. They were knocked out of the playoffs by eventual national champion Georgia Southern, a team that MTSU had beaten soundly earlier in the season; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, Donnelly's Raiders went 6-0 in OVC play, capturing another league title and defeating Appalachian State in the first round of the playoffs; and

WHEREAS, the 1990 team finished OVC competition as co-champions and was ranked as the number one team in the nation by the final NCAA poll; and

WHEREAS, a year later Coach Donnelly's Blue Raiders completed the season with a 9-4 record and again advanced to the NCAA Playoff quarterfinals, followed by a 10-3 campaign in 1992 with the team's three losses coming at the hands of Division I-A giant Nebraska and Division 2-A powers Georgia Southern and eventual national champion Marshall; and

WHEREAS, last year's Raiders compiled an 8-2-1 record, making it the seventh Donnelly-coached team to advance to the NCAA playoffs; and

WHEREAS, it is important that the members of this legislative body honor those persons who have consistently excelled in their chosen professions; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby congratulate Coach Boots Donnelly for receiving the 1995 Tennessee Sportswriters Association's Coach of the Year Award, extending to him our best wishes for much continued success at the helm of the Blue Raiders.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.